

# Health Equity as a Social Determinate of Health

Brief overview by Janice Edmunds-Wells, MSW, CPH  
Executive Director/Executive Officer Iowa Dept. of Public Health  
Office of Minority and Multicultural Health  
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“Of all the inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane”

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

We currently see an emergence of certain terms such as, cross cultural health, population health, health equity, health disparities, health inequities and many more - however the terms of

Vulnerable populations

Populations at Risk

Minorities, Immigrants, Refugees

Rural Populations

Elderly

Poor

Uninsured

Underinsured

Working Poor

Have vs Have Not's

Injustice

Racial Prejudices

Are terms that have been used in the past to address some of the issues of the present and future populations within the United States and the state of Iowa.

# Health Equity

Health equity is the attainment of the highest level of health for all people.

Achieving health equity requires valuing everyone equally with a focus on ongoing societal efforts to address avoidable inequalities, historical and contemporary injustices, and the elimination of health and healthcare disparities.

- National Stakeholder Strategy, Healthy People 2020 and Health and Human Services (HHS) Services Plan

# Health Disparities

A health disparity is a particular type of health difference that is closely linked with social, economic, and/or environmental disadvantage. Health disparities adversely affect groups of people who have systematically experienced greater obstacles to health based on their racial and/or ethnic group; religion; socioeconomic state; gender; age; mental health; cognitive, sensory or physical disability; sexual orientation or gender identity; geographic location; or other characteristics historically linked to discrimination or exclusion.

- National Stakeholder Strategy, Health and Human Services (HHS) Plan and Healthy People 2020

# Health Disparities are differences in health outcomes among groups of people

Health inequities are difference in health outcomes that are avoidable, unfair and unjust. Health inequities are affected by social, economic and environmental conditions.

“The concepts of health equity and health inequities are inseparable in their practical implementation. Policies and practices aimed at promoting the goal of health equity will not immediately eliminate all health inequities, but they will provide a foundation for moving closer to that goal”.

Source: useful definitions 2016 legislative session/rev. 11/25/15

# Social Determinates of Health

External factors that influence health outcomes are known as the Social Determinates of Health. Examples include but are not limited to:

Housing

Education

Jobs

Environment

Health Care

Transportation

Food Security

Nutrition

# The five key areas (determinates) include

- ▶ Economic Stability
  - ▶ Education
  - ▶ Social and Community Context
  - ▶ Health and Health Care
  - ▶ Neighborhood and Built Environment
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- ▶ These five key areas can often be seen in various areas of policy development, program implementation, goals, objectives, performance measures, etc. All determinates lead back to issues related to health equity, health disparities, quality of life and accessibilities and/or barriers

# Health Equity as a Social Determinant of Health

In our efforts to reduce health inequalities, it requires action in reducing socioeconomic and other inequalities. There are many factors that influence health, but these are outweighed by the overwhelming impact of social and economic factors - the material, social, political and cultural conditions that shape our lives and our behaviors. Evidence as set forth in the World Health Organization Global Commission on the Social Determinates of Health.

The link between social conditions and health, magnify health inequalities as an indicator of the impact of social and economic inequalities on people's lives. Health then becomes a concern especially during times of rapid increases in inequalities of wealth and income in today's society.



# Lifestyle Drift and Overconcentration

Two issues must be understood before we can act on knowledge of social determinates of health to address health equities;

Lifestyle drift: the tendency in public health to focus on individual behaviors, such as smoking, diet, alcohol and drugs that are undoubted causes of health inequities. But, one must not ignore the drivers of these behaviors - the causes for the causes.

Overconcentration in that too often health is equated only with health care.

Determinates of health status of populations show relatively significant proportion of inequity attributed to social determinates.

# Social Determinates of Health have a significant impact on health outcomes

Social determinates of health are the structural determinates and conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work and age. They include socioeconomic status, education, the physical environment, employment and social support networks, as well as access to health care.

Long standing research has consistently identified disparities experienced by racial and ethnic minority, low-income and other vulnerable communities, due to differences in health outcomes that are closely linked with social, economic and environmental disadvantages. Stress via these associated factors has also been attributed to various disproportionate outcomes across the life span.

As stated within Healthy People 2020 achieving health equity as the highest level of health for all people - will required addressing these social and environmental determinants through both broad population based approaches and targeted approaches focused on those communities experiencing the greatest disparities.

# Geospatial analysis and community needs assessments

The importance of mapping and geospatial analysis for assessing and addressing health needs is not new. The importance of the relationship between neighborhoods and health continues to be recognized, and zip code understood to be a stronger predictor of a person's health than their genetic code.

We have all heard the term “place matters” be it where you live, how you live, the changes that take place within a given time span and with changing demographics.

Place also matters when addressing the social determinates of health and the terms of health equity, health disparities, population health and changing demographics not just within race/ethnicity but all the areas mentioned within this topic.

We are all in this race, in this place, to address social determinates of health and health equity - this place is IOWA



# Conclusion

- ▶ There has been a great focus on unhealthy behaviors that drive a individuals/populations to ill health. It views the individuals as responsible for their own health and feel they can improve it through better health behaviors such as: sensible drinking, eating and not smoking. However we need to understand and improve the social determinates of behaviors to reduce health inequalities and improve health while simultaneously trying to facilitate and support better existing behaviors.
- ▶ There is evidence that shows interventions are efficient, equitable, and effective when designed and delivered in the right way.
- ▶ Poverty, rising inequality in income and assets and social exclusion all drive widening and deepening health inequalities.
- ▶ Greater impact requires greater action and will. Working toward more equitable provisions, public health and the medical workforce have critical roles to play in social and political advocacy at all levels, in helping lead more equitable health and social and economic systems.

# We are all affected by the social determinates of health

Housing

Education

Jobs

Food Security

Economic Stability

Neighborhoods and Built Environments

Environment

Health Care

Transportation

Nutrition

Social and Community Context

We live, work, play with and surrounded by present and future populations of:

Vulnerable populations

Populations at risk

Minorities, Immigrants, Refugees

Rural

Elderly

Poor

Uninsured

Underinsured

Working Poor

Have vs Have Not's

Experiencing Injustice

Experiencing Prejudices

# The time is now - the place is here

- ▶ What do you need to move forward?
- ▶ What do you need to have more understanding, compassion and/or commitment?
- ▶ Why should you care?
- ▶ What are you already doing - that you don't even realize you are doing, in addressing these issues?
- ▶ What do you want to do?

# Resources

Social Determinants of Health Equity

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/>

Janice Edmunds-Wells, MSW, CPH - IDPH Office of Minority and Multicultural Health (515) 281-4904 or [Janice.Edmunds-Wells@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:Janice.Edmunds-Wells@idph.iowa.gov)

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DHHS Office of Minority and Multicultural Health

[www.omhrc](http://www.omhrc)